Haiti - A Natural Disaster?

DIRECTIONS

Read the following news story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions.

STORY

**Island Nation of Haiti Reels After Earthquake Causes 'Enormous' Damage**

01/13/2010

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june10/haiti_01-13.html>

Questions using the text

1. **What happened in Haiti January 12, 2010?**

* In Haiti on January 12 a 7.0 earthquake hit.

1. **Why did so many buildings collapse?**

* So many buildings collapsed because 60 percent of them were not well built and unsafe on a regular day allowing them to be easily destroyed when an earthquake hit.

1. **What is the relationship between Haiti and the United States?**

* The United States have pledged to help and support Haiti with rescue and humanitarian assistance as well as offering condolences for the tragedy.

1. **How can Americans help the situation in Haiti?**

* The Americans are looking to try to get in more food and gasoline to try and help the situation in Haiti as these products are needed greatly. As well the US is trying to get people to donate money to help the efforts in Haiti and to raise awareness.

1. **What happened in Haiti in 1804?**

* In 1804 Haiti became a nation after the first black slave rebellion against the French that was led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

1. **Who was “Papa Doc?”**

* Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier took control of Haiti in 1957 by killing all opposition. This resulted in tens of thousands being brutally killed and tortured.

1. **Who was Jean Bertrand Aristide?**

* Jean Bertrand Aristide was a slum priest who was elected in 1990 but was overthrown in 1991 by military dictatorship which caused thousands of Haitians to go out in unsafe boats in hopes to get to Florida.

1. **What is the Gonave microplate?**

* The Gonave microplate is a small piece of the earth’s crust that lies between the North American plate and Caribbean plate where Haiti is located.

**Extended Tasks**

1. **Watch the Video and then explain exactly the causes of the Earthquake in Port au Prince. You can add any images you can find.**

* There is a fault line right through Haiti and into the Dominican Republic and when the fault moved it caused an earthquake. One major problem was that the fault was only six miles deep and because of this there was more shaking at the surface of the earth where if it had been deeper most of the shaking would have been under the surface and because of this there was a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that hit.

1. **Why Did So many People Die in Haiti?**

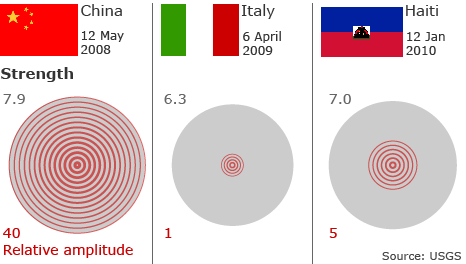
* So many people in Haiti died because the buildings were not built properly and easily collapsed and were unsafe under regular conditions. This resulted in buildings falling with people in them and under them which caused many deaths. The Haitians were unprepared for the quake to hit which also resulted in deaths for many people because they were not in safe areas where they would not get hurt.

**The devastating earthquakes that hit China on 12 May 2008, Italy on 6 April 2009 and Haiti in January 2010 all measured above 6.0 and took many lives. But why was the human cost so much greater for Haiti?**

**Use the article below to answer this question in a number of points. You will need to add data to help back up your answer.**

[**http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8510900.stm**](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8510900.stm)

* Death toll is based on the scale of the earthquake, how near it is to the surface, how many people are living near the centre of the quake and whether it is a heavily urbanized area.
* Haiti had all of the above criteria for a higher death toll as well as high poverty which also has an effect on the impact of the earthquake.
* 72.1 percent of Haitians are living on less than 2 dollars a day which means that there is not a sufficient amount of money to put into their buildings therefore they are not built to be stable under disasters.
* Haiti was hit right in a highly urbanized area that was not built properly without any building codes followed and therefore had a higher devastation level.
* Due to where the earthquake hit, in the capital, Port-Au-Prince, there was more rubble to kill those in the area which resulted in 1 in every 15 people dying unlike the smaller death tolls of China( 1 in every 595) and Italy(1 in every 190)
* Luckily for Haiti, unlike China and Italy there were rescue teams ready quickly to aid with the aftermath.



* The strength of the amplitude was much higher in China; however the death toll was much less. Even in Italy there was a smaller earthquake but higher death toll simply due to poverty and urbanization.